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Stravinsky as Serialist: The Sketches for *Threni*

David H. Smyth

Threni, Stravinsky's setting of verses from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, remains among his least known works—seldom performed, recorded but once (to the best of my knowledge), and little discussed even by the staunchest devotees of the composer's late works.¹ Overshadowed by the energetic *Agon*, the mercurial *Movements for Piano and Orchestra*, the multi-colored “Huxley”

This essay is an expanded version of a paper presented at CUMAC '97, a music analysis conference at Cambridge University in August 1997. The author gratefully acknowledges helpful suggestions for its revision by Joseph Straus and by the anonymous reviewers for this journal.

¹Valuable early studies of the work include Hansjörg Pauli, “On Stravinsky's *Threni*,” *Tempo* 49 (1958): 16–33; and Roman Vlad, “Igor Stravinsky's *Threni*,” *Melos* 16 (1959): 36–39. *Threni* has since been the subject of several theses and dissertations: Graeme M. Cowen, “Igor Stravinsky's *Threni*: A Conductor's Study for Performance” (D.M.A. diss., Indiana University, 1981); Clare Hogan, “An Examination of Stravinsky's Contribution to Serialism in Light of the Theories, Music, and Personality of Ernst Krenek, with Particular Reference to the Connection Between *Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetiae* and *Threni*” (M.A. Thesis, University of Keele, 1982); William J. Waters, “An Analysis of Igor Stravinsky's *Threni* Based on Edward T. Cone's Principles of Stratification, Interlock, and Synthesis” (M.M. Thesis, Florida State University, 1984); and Andreas Douw, “The Construction of Order and Direction in Igor Stravinsky's *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*, *Canticum Sacrum*, and *Threni*” (doctoral diss., University of Utrecht, 1995). Susannah Tucker, “Stravinsky and His Sketches: The Composing of *Agon* and Other Serial Works of the 1950s” (doctoral diss., Oxford University, 1992) discusses selected sketches for *Threni*. It is nonetheless fair to say the work awaits comprehensive analysis, most especially with regard to its textures and rhythms.

Variations, and the sublime *Requiem Canticles*, *Threni* holds many listeners at arm's length. Yet this work was Stravinsky's first entirely dodecaphonic score, and the longest he was ever to compose. During its genesis (from summer 1957 to spring 1958) the composer consolidated his command of serial techniques. At the age of seventy-five, Stravinsky proceeded with great self-assurance, simultaneously inventing ways to modify traditional serial operations and reinventing elements of his highly developed personal compositional style.

The composer's sketches for *Threni* are extensive, ranging from tiny scraps of paper to large leaves containing fair copy drafts with full instrumentation.² As work on *Threni* progressed, Stravinsky drew musical ideas from the text he had chosen, but he also revised his text and formal plan in accord with properties of the twelve-tone rows he employed. The sketches illustrate aspects of this give-and-take process and reveal working methods that neither the composer nor any subsequent analyst has ever described in detail. In the present essay I examine selected text drafts and musical sketches which illuminate these working

²In the *Sammlung Igor Strawinsky* at the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, materials relating to *Threni* occupy two large folders. Of primary interest are drafts of the text and musical sketches recorded on Microfilm 114, frames 764 to 866. The author acknowledges the generous assistance of the Sacher Foundation in the form of a research stipend (March–June 1996), which enabled him to study these and other materials in the archive during a sabbatical leave from Louisiana State University.

methods. In particular, I am concerned with sketches relating to the invention of the row upon which *Threni* is based, with Stravinsky's discovery of certain characteristics and properties of this row, and with how he selected and deployed specific row forms throughout the piece.

It is easy to understand why a composer who first experimented with dodecaphonic technique in a ballet for twelve dancers was attracted to the Lamentations of Jeremiah. This text contains some of the Bible's most highly organized numerical ciphers and acrostic designs. The twenty-two verses of the first chapter begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet; in the third chapter, sixty-six verses represent a three-fold multiplication of the same design. The fifth and final chapter does not feature an acrostic, but like the first has twenty-two verses. In selecting verses from these three chapters for *Threni*, Stravinsky indulged a lifelong penchant for numerical patterning and a predilection for symmetrical and palindromic constructions. Yet, just as translation of the Lamentations into Latin (or English) eradicates elements of their original alphabetical and rhythmic design, Stravinsky's abridged selection of verses alters both the form and the meaning of the source text. One might say that Stravinsky's task in composing *Threni* was to recover and to recreate order out of the shattered acrostics of the biblical original. His musical setting overlays new orderings that support and aesthetically validate his "misreading" of the text.³

The sketch leaf presented in Example 1 amply demonstrates how the text Stravinsky chose shaped the musical content of *Threni* from the very outset. Example 1a divides the leaf into regions and labels the content of each; Example 1b is a diplomatic

³Obviously, my reference is to Harold Bloom's theory of the "anxiety of influence." For applications of Bloom's theory to musical analysis, see Joseph N. Straus, *Remaking the Past: Tradition and Influence in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990); Kevin Korsyn, "Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence," *Music Analysis* 10/1 (1991): 3–72; and Alan Street, "Carnival," *Music Analysis* 13/2–3 (1994): 255–98.

transcription of the page.⁴ At the upper left, we see what are probably the first musical jottings relating to *Threni*.⁵ These sketches record Stravinsky's invention of the row upon which the work is based. The words "Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae" are not of biblical origin; Thomas Tallis used them to open his setting of the *Lamentations*—which Stravinsky admitted he knew.⁶ Short musical motives associated with these words (or portions thereof) became the building blocks from which he produced *Threni*'s row.

At the beginning of staff 2 in Example 1b, the word "Incipit" is set to an undulating line made up of the notes F#, F, and G#; a slightly modified version appears on staff 5 at the beginning of the duet setting. The (013) trichord associated with "Incipit" in these sketches survives (transposed and reordered as G, G#, A#) in the finished score in mm. 8–9 (shown in Example 2e below). Similarly, in the sketch on staff 3, Stravinsky set the word "Lamentatio" to the notes F#, G#, F#, B, and G—allowing himself the luxury of recycling two tones he had already used, as well as another internal repetition. The setting of this word on staff 5 retains the same pitch content, although the notes are reordered. The (014) trichord projected by the last three syllables of this setting is re-

⁴This leaf corresponds to Microfilm 114, Frame 859. In my transcription, all editorial additions (staff numbers and missing clefs, for example) appear in square brackets.

⁵These sketches clearly predate the one Craft and others have assumed to mark the beginning of Stravinsky's work on *Threni*: a sketch for the beginning of the instrumental prelude (mm. 1–4 of the completed score) which is dated "Venezia 29 Aug 57" (corresponding to Microfilm 114, Frame 862). Robert Craft states that "Stravinsky had begun *Threni* at the piano of the nightclub of his Venice hotel, on August 29, 1957, composing the opening measures"; see Vera Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 443. Clearly, Stravinsky could not have composed the opening instrumental measures before he invented *Threni*'s row.

⁶Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 22. Presumably these words provide a counterweight for the intonation "Oratio Jeremiae Prophetae" which opens the final movement of *Threni*, and which does appear in the Vulgate text Stravinsky consulted.

tained with the same contour in mm. 10–11 of the finished score (transposed up a whole step; see Ex. 2e).

The handling of the seven syllables of “Jeremiae Prophetae” is more complicated. The first setting of “Jeremiae” on staff 1 employs the notes B, G, C#, and D, forming the all-interval tetrachord (0137). In the continuation of this sketch, the succession C, Eb, Bb, (Eb), E forms the other all-interval tetrachord (0146). Stravinsky showed considerable interest in the latter tetrachord: he used exactly these notes again in the revision on staff 2, wrote them again in the middle of staff 3 (omitting the repetition of Eb), used them in long note values in the duet on staff 5, and reordered them yet again as an experimental accompaniment on staff 7. Ultimately, only the set class of the last three notes survives in the finished score—the (016) “Prophetiae” trichord, expressed as a falling perfect fifth followed by a rising semitone in mm. 14–18 (see Ex. 2e). The word “Jeremiae” is set a second time on staff 1 (Ex. 1b) using G, D, A, C, and is carried down unchanged to staff 5. It is further modified in a third setting on staff 1, where the notes read A, D, B, E. Both the contour and set class of the second setting are preserved even though the pitch content changes. Of course, (0257) was among Stravinsky’s favorite diatonic tetrachords; it is ubiquitous in his music from the Russian period onward, and (as we shall see) it is important throughout *Threni*.⁷ Here the (0257) is joined to (016), fixing the definitive ordering and pitch level of the last seven notes of *Threni*’s Prime series.

Stravinsky’s word-by-word approach to the text yielded not only ordered pitch-class strings but also contoured melodic segments, the rhythms of which remained subject to further adjustment. Throughout his later years, Stravinsky often claimed that his serial ideas came to him as melodies or snippets of counterpoint.⁸ While this could be interpreted to mean that Stravinsky

imagined or invented complete twelve-note themes, these sketches demonstrate a somewhat different method. Rather than constructing a complete series and then fitting his text to it, here Stravinsky began with distinct melodic motives that he associated with specific words.

However, a small problem remains. The first twelve notes on staff 1 do not exhaust the aggregate: there is no A#, and Eb is repeated. The top voice of the duet as sketched on staff 5 is likewise imperfect, for it lacks C#. Example 2 illustrates a series of steps Stravinsky may have taken to complete the definitive Prime of *Threni*. Example 2a extracts the pc content of the top voice of the “Incipit” duet, as sketched on staff 5 of Example 1b. Stravinsky may have decided that the dyad F–F# was more desirable as an ending than as a beginning, and accordingly, he transposed each of his word-related pitch cells up a whole step: Example 2b reproduces Stravinsky’s transposed and modified setting of the final seven syllables as found on staff 1. Example 2c completes the setting by adding the (013) “Incipit” trichord followed by the (014) “-tatio” trichord, both transposed up a whole step from previous appearances. Comparison with the soprano line in mm. 8–15 of the score (Ex. 2e) shows how close Stravinsky had come to the final version. The row still lacked one pitch class, however.

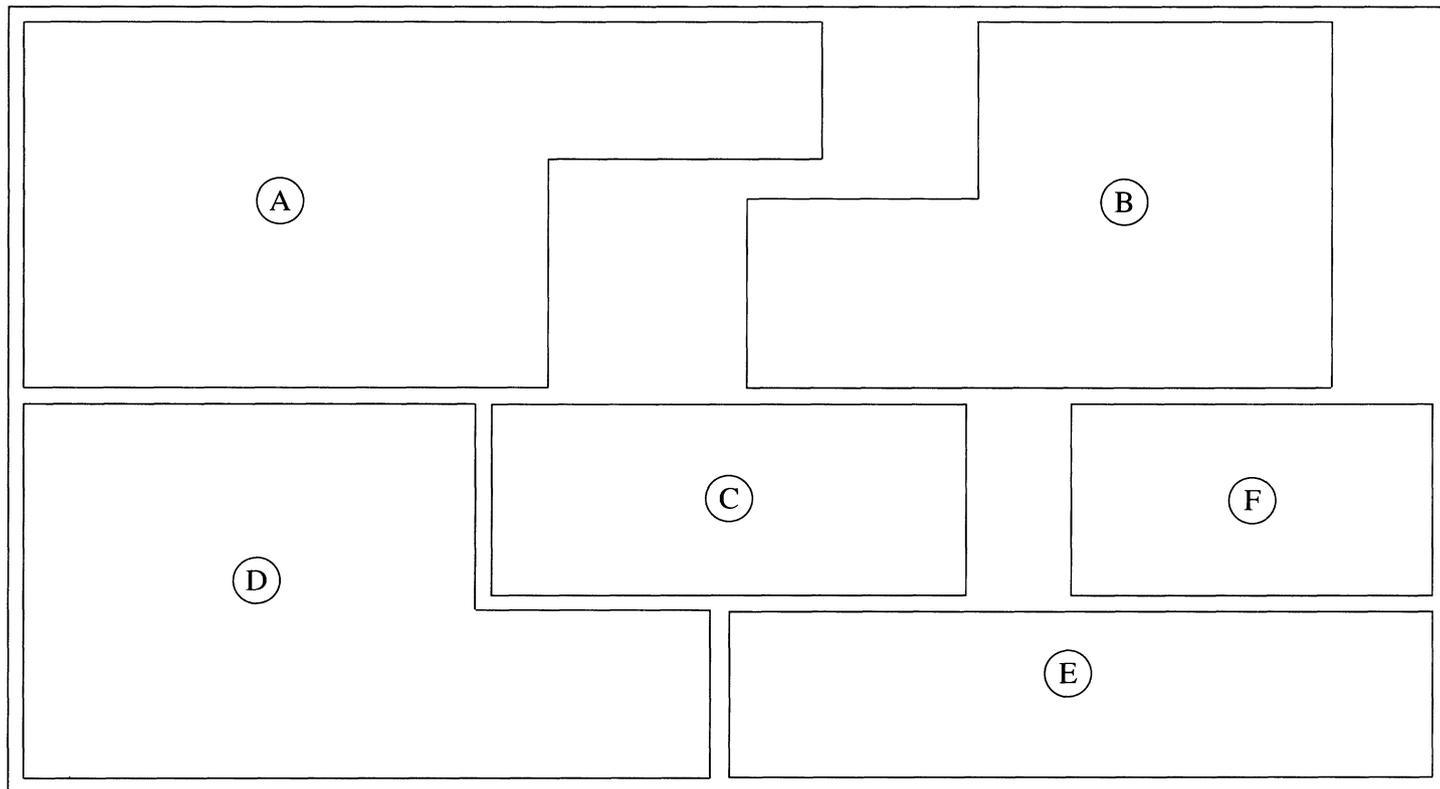
To complete the definitive Prime, Stravinsky had only to exchange the pitch classes G and G#, and to add D# at the beginning (see Ex. 2d); the latter note—Stravinsky’s own initial (Eb = Es)—will take on a pivotal role throughout *Threni*, as we shall see. In the published score, the word “Incipit,” which does not invite melismatic setting, is repeated in the soprano part to accommodate the additional note. Stravinsky thus abandoned his original

me as a melody”; see Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Themes and Conclusions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 62. Elsewhere he states that he began *Epitaphium* with a duet for two flutes; see Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 105. In the completed score, the duet appears as bar 2—now scored for flute and clarinet.

⁷See Pieter C. van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), Chapter 3, for a discussion of the diatonic pitch collection in the music of Stravinsky’s “Russian” period.

⁸Stravinsky’s program note for the Variations begins “The succession of pitches and intervals on which my Variations were composed first occurred to

Example 1a. Table of contents for an early sketch leaf for *Threni*



- A Top Left, staves 1–7: sketches for “Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetarum”
- B Top Right, staves 1–7: abbreviated row table ($I_0, I_6, P_0, I_0, R_0, RI_6, RI_5$); partial RI_3 on staff 6.
- C Center, staves 8–10: sketch for “Aleph” (mm. 19–22) using RI_6
- D Lower Left, staves 8–15: sketches for “Beth” (mm. 62–65) using R_0 and RI_{10}
- E Lower Right, staves 12–15: sketches for “Quomodo sedet . . .” (mm. 42–48) using RI_0
- F Right Center, staves 7–10: approximate timings for various sections

Note: All rows are identified as in the serial matrix shown in Example 3 below.

Example 1b. Diplomatic transcription of *Threni* sketch leaf (Microfilm 114, Frame 859), by permission of the Paul Sacher Foundation

Je re mi ae
ae Pro- fe- tae Je re mi ae pro fe tae Je re mi ae pro fe tae

In- ci- pit

La men ta ti o

In- ci- pit La men ta ti- o Je re mi ae Pro- fe- tae

A- leph A- leph
ten

Aleph
leph

sedet sola civitas
ple- na populo

Quo mo do se det se det sola ci vi- tas ple na populo

INCIPIUNT 40"
<ILLEGIBLES> 7' 15"

ALEPH
HE
RES } 2' 15"

1.0"
Ritornello

BETH
CAPH } Cantus [?]
1.0

Example 2. Construction of *Threni's* Prime series

a) early sketch (Ex. 1b, staff 5)

In- ci- pit (La- men-) ta- ti- o Je- re- mi- ae Pro- phe- tae

b) intermediate sketch (Ex. 1b, staff 1) showing transposition up a step and modification of the (0257) tetrachord

Je- re- mi- ae Pro- phe- tae

c) hypothetical completion using transposed trichords from a)

In- ci- pit La- men- ta- ti- o Je- re- mi- ae Pro- phe- tae

d) *Threni's* definitive prime

e) completed score, mm. 5–18 (vocal duet only)

Sopr. *mf* In- - ci- - pit, in- ci- pit — la- men- ta- ti- o

Alto *mf* In- - ci- - pit, la- men- ta- ti- o Je-

Je- re- mi- ae Pro- phe- - tae, _____

-re- mi- ae Pro- phe- tae, _____

plan for a simple homorhythmic “mirror” duet (as sketched on staves 5 and 6 of Ex. 1b), and used the unequal number of syllables in the two solo lines to promote rhythmic independence between the voices in the finished score. Only after fashioning textured, rhythmicized, and contoured motives for individual words did Stravinsky complete the definitive Prime—apparently by working backward from the end. He followed a similar process in inventing the series upon which “Surge, aquilo,” his first entirely twelve-tone movement, was based.⁹ In this regard, it is worthwhile to recall Stravinsky’s words of 27 May 1930:

When I start a work, an idea from inside has taken me, and, when starting, I may see the end or the middle, but not the beginning. That always has to be found, has to be developed in the spirit of the composition, that discovery of the correct entrance to a piece.¹⁰

Having invented the definitive Prime, Stravinsky constructed an abbreviated row chart on this same leaf, at the upper right. (For the reader’s convenience, a full serial matrix for *Threni* is provided in Example 3.) The four canonical serial transformations appear on staves 3, 4, 5, and 6 of Example 1b. Stravinsky labels the Prime on staff 3 “O” (for “original”), and writes its Inversion (“I”) immediately below (staff 4). On staves 5 and 6, the Retrograde and its Inversion (both beginning on F#) are paired.¹¹ Stravinsky’s inclusion of the Inversion of the Retrograde (IR, as opposed to RI, the Retrograde of the Inversion) is noteworthy, for it corresponds to what was to become his standard practice in later serial works.

⁹See Tucker, “Stravinsky and His Sketches,” Chapter 5, for a sketch-based account of the genesis of the row used in “Surge, aquilo.” A somewhat different account based on the same sketches is proposed in David Smyth, “Stravinsky’s Second Crisis: Reading the Early Serial Sketches,” *Perspectives of New Music*, forthcoming.

¹⁰Quoted in *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, 197.

¹¹Tucker explains how Craft coached Stravinsky away from referring to the Retrograde as “cancrizans” and the Inversion as “riverso” (among other names), and advised him to employ more modern designations (Tucker, “Stravinsky and His Sketches,” 121–22).

Example 3. Serial Matrix for *Threni* (C=0, A#=t, B=e)

	0	5	4	7	10	6	11	8	1	9	2	3
0	3	8	7	t	1	9	2	e	4	0	5	6
7	t	3	2	5	8	4	9	6	e	7	0	1
8	e	4	3	6	9	5	t	7	0	8	1	2
5	8	1	0	3	6	2	7	4	9	5	t	e
2	5	t	9	0	3	e	4	1	6	2	7	8
6	9	2	1	4	7	3	8	5	t	6	e	0
1	4	9	8	e	2	t	3	0	5	1	6	7
4	7	0	e	2	5	1	6	3	8	4	9	t
11	2	7	6	9	0	8	1	t	3	e	4	5
3	6	e	t	1	4	0	5	2	7	3	8	9
10	1	6	5	8	e	7	0	9	2	t	3	4
9	0	5	4	7	t	6	e	8	1	9	2	3

Here, there is evidence that Stravinsky derived IR in a rather peculiar way. On staves 1 and 2 at upper right, he aligned the Inversion with its tritone transposition. The Inversion on staff 1 retains the “all sharps” spelling used for that on staff 4, and in the Prime and Retrograde as well. The transposed Inversion on staff 2 has a new contour and is spelled using a mixture of sharps and flats. Exactly the same accidentals are used in the row on staff 6, suggesting that Stravinsky may have obtained IR by retrograding the row on staff 2, or that he got the row on staff 2 by reversing the one on staff 6. By the same reasoning, the “all flats” spelling of the transposed IR on staff 7 might indicate that it was a later addition to the basic list of four row forms. I will speculate further about features of this particular row in due course.

In any case, the untransposed IR was put to immediate use in an early sketch for the Hebrew initial “Aleph” (Ex. 1b, staves 8, 9, and 10, center). In this polyphonic sketch, note the vertical fifths C–G, D♭–A♭, E♭–B♭, and finally E–B (C♭). The last is achieved through finesse: the intervening series members D and F are

Example 4. *De Elegia Prima*: “Aleph” (mm. 19–22)

S. *fp* *mf* *p* *mf*
 A-LEPH A-LEPH
 A. *f* *p* *mf*
 A-LEPH A-LEPH
 T. *f* *p* *mf*
 A-LEPH A-LEPH
 B. *f* *p* *fp* *mf*
 A-LEPH A-LEPH
 VI. I *pizz.*
 VI. II *div.* *f*
 VI. *f pizz.*
 Vc. *f pizz.*
 Cb. *f pizz.*

RI₆ {6,7,0,8,1,t,3,e,2,5,4,9}
 G C Ab Db Bb Eb B E

shown as unstemmed note heads in the sketch. The same succession of fifths is audible in mm. 19–22 of the finished score, as shown in Example 4. The sketch indicates Stravinsky’s interest in projecting such successions, in effect enlarging upon the (0257) “Jeremiae” tetrachord of the original row. Alone and in succession, perfect fourths and fifths imbue much of *Threni*’s harmonic palette.

A related harmonic experiment appears at the lower left of Example 1b. The sketchings on staves 12 and 13 align RI₁₀ and R₀. On staves 8 and 9, Stravinsky adjusts the rhythms of the same pairing. Ultimately, these notes will be distributed among four choral voices in the Hebrew initial “Beth,” mm. 62–65, as shown in Example 5. A brief sketch for the orchestral accompaniment of this passage appears on staff 15 of the sketch leaf (Ex. 1b), and illustrates another Stravinskian technique for manipulating serial harmonies. While using the final notes of two row forms, he sustains Db, the eighth note of the Retrograde, until it is doubled by the last note of RI₁₀. The final version shown in Example 5 is considerably different from the sketch, but one can see how Stravinsky repeats and sustains tones in both the choral and accompanimental lines to reach the (0257) tetrachord Db, Eb, Ab, Gb in m. 65; it is not an ordered segment in either row. Precisely these notes occur in longer rhythmic values near the end of staves 12 and 13 of the sketch.

The four rows (P, R, I, and IR) the composer wrote in his abbreviated row chart came to constitute a “tonic complex” in *Threni*, as such groupings of row forms do in most of Stravinsky’s later serial music.¹² In a recent article Joseph N. Straus demonstrates how the initial and terminal notes of these rows affect the construction of various types of serial arrays in Stravinsky’s late

¹²The same four row forms appear in another abbreviated row table for *Threni* on a separate sketch leaf (corresponding to Microfilm 114, Frame 764): P, R, I, and IR are written in the same clefs and with exactly the same accidentals as in Example 1b. The unorthodox musical orthography of Stravinsky’s late works and sketches cries out for detailed study.

Example 5. *De Elegia Prima*: “Beth” (mm. 62–65)

S. $\text{♩} = 60$ *sf*
 A. *sf*
 CORO
 T. *sf*
 B. *sf*
 VI. I *pizz.*
 VI. II *pizz.*
 Vle. *sf*
 Vc. *sf* *div.*
 Cb. *sf pizz.* *(b)*

$\{D^\flat, E^\flat, A^\flat, G^\flat\}$
 $= (0257)$

$RI_{10} \{t, e, 4, 0, 5, 2, 7, 3, 6, 9, 8, 1\}$

$R_0 \{6, 5, 0, 4, e, 2, 9, 1, t, 7, 8, 3\}$

music.¹³ Because the initial and terminal notes of *Threni*'s row form a dyad of interval class 3, the boundary notes of the four rows of *Threni*'s tonic complex spell out the "diminished seventh" tetrachord D#, F#, A, C. Listeners can reasonably expect D#, the initial tone of the untransposed Prime and Inversion, to achieve some degree of priority, with F# taking second place, and C and A playing somewhat less prominent roles. However, in 1957 Stravinsky did not eschew transpositions of the rows of the tonic complex, as he would come to do in later works. On this sketch leaf alone, there are no fewer than five different transpositions of the Retrograde Inversion (complete or partial): these are identified in Example 1a, and all five are used in the opening section of *Threni*. The presence of particular row forms and transpositions in these early sketches provides hints as to how Stravinsky selected the rows and transpositions he employed throughout the work.

The form of the First Elegy—and to a degree, that of the entire piece—suggests that Stravinsky distinguished between three distinct "families" of rows. The initial and terminal notes of the four rows of the tonic complex (D#, F#, A, and C) define a larger family of sixteen row forms that have these notes as boundary tones, which I will refer to as the {0369} family. Correspondingly, the remaining row forms belong to the {147t} or the {258e} family, according to their initial (and terminal) notes. Example 6 illustrates how Stravinsky used members of the {0369} family to anchor the "tonic" sections of the rondo-like form of the First Elegy.¹⁴ The digressive episodes ("Beth" and "Caph") include excursions to the {147t} and {258e} families, respectively. This plan foretells the design of the entire work, which likewise traces

¹³Joseph N. Straus, "Stravinsky's 'Construction of Twelve Verticals': An Aspect of Harmony in the Serial Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 21/1 (1999): 43–73. Straus considerably advances our understanding of the rotational and other serial arrays Stravinsky employed in his works from *Movements* onward. He also explores precedents for these harmonic constructions in *Agon*, *Canticum Sacrum*, and *Threni* (see his Example 21).

¹⁴There is a single exception: the prime used at the beginning of "He" belongs to the {147t} family. Its place in the overall plan is addressed below.

Example 6. *De Elegia Prima*: Form and row usage

A ¹	mm. 19–22	Aleph (chorus)	RI ₆	{6, 7 . . . 4, 9}
	mm. 23–41	transition and Chorus, parlando	I ₀ I ₆	{3, t . . . 1, 0} {9, 4 . . . 7, 6}
	mm. 42–61	Ritornello (tenor/flugelhorn)	RI ₀ R ₀	{0, 1 . . . t, 3} {6, 5 . . . 8, 3}
B	mm. 62–65	Beth (chorus)	R ₀ RI ₁₀	{6, 5 . . . 8, 3} {t, e . . . 8, 1}
	mm. 66–67	Diphona I (solo tenors)	R ₀ I ₀ RI ₆	{6, 5 . . . 8, 3} {3, t . . . 1, 0} {6, 7 . . . 4, 9}
			P ₀	{3, 8 . . . 5, 6}
A ²	mm. 68–72	He (chorus)	P ₇ I ₀	{t, 3 . . . 0, 1} {3, t . . . 1, 0}
	mm. 73–87	transition and Chorus, parlando (as in mm. 23–41)	I ₀ I ₆	{3, t . . . 1, 0} {9, 4 . . . 7, 6}
	mm. 88–107	Ritornello (as in mm. 42–61)	RI ₀ R ₀	{0, 1 . . . t, 3} {6, 5 . . . 8, 3}
C	mm. 108–111	Caph (chorus)	P ₁₁ I ₁₁ RI ₀	{2, 7 . . . 4, 5} {2, 9 . . . 0, e} {0, 1 . . . t, 3}
	mm. 112–113	Diphona II (solo tenors)	R ₁₁ P ₀ I ₀ RI ₅	{5, 4 . . . 7, 2} {3, 8 . . . 5, 6} {3, t . . . 1, 0} {5, 6 . . . 3, 8}
	mm. 114–119	Resh (chorus)	P ₃ R ₀ I ₃ RI ₆	{6, e . . . 8, 9} {6, 5 . . . 8, 3} {6, 1 . . . 4, 3} {6, 7 . . . 4, 9}
	mm. 120–141	transition and Chorus, parlando (as in mm. 23–41)	I ₀ I ₆	{3, t . . . 1, 0} {9, 4 . . . 7, 6}
	mm. 142–165	Ritornello (as in mm. 42–61)	RI ₀ R ₀	{0, 1 . . . t, 3} {6, 5 . . . 8, 3}

an overall path from members of the {0369} family to members of the other families and back—appropriately enough, since the Lamentations are very much about yearning for the restoration of God’s favor.

Linkage between and among row forms is strongest in cases where Retrograde-related pairs occur. At the beginning and ending of the First Elegy, for example, Inversions beginning on D# and A and their respective Retrogrades provide all of the material except that of the tenor/flugelhorn duet (which is a canon using the untransposed Retrograde). Diphona I employs much the same cluster of rows from the {0369} family, with the untransposed Prime substituted for its Retrograde. A subtler type of linkage occurs between rows in which boundary dyads are invariant: the Prime and the Inversion used in “He” begin and end with the dyads Bb–Eb and C–C#, but in reverse order. The same is true of the boundary dyads of RI₅ used in Diphona II (F–F# and D#–G#) and the untransposed Retrograde used in “Resh” (F#–F and G#–D#). Links of this kind enabled Stravinsky to “modulate” smoothly from members of one row family to another: RI₁₀ in “Beth” shares boundary tones (A# and C#) with the P₇ used in “He,” which in turn shares order-reversed boundary dyads (A#–D# and C–C#) with I₀ in the immediately following music. Stravinsky’s inclusion of the “redundant” RI₅ in his abbreviated row chart (Ex. 1b, staff 7) may document his discovery of this special property of the row: RI₅ has the same boundary dyads as the untransposed Prime (and Retrograde).

Early drafts of “Caph” were pitched a half step higher—that is, they were initially based upon P₀, I₀, and RI₀ rows from the {0369} family.¹⁵ The score excerpt in Example 7 illustrates Stravinsky’s plan for the chorus to selectively pluck out members of the rows presented by the orchestra, once again projecting several series of perfect fifths: C–G–D, C#–F#–B, and F–Bb–Eb in

¹⁵See Microfilm 114, Frames 834 and 835; the passage appears at its final transpositional level for the first time in Frame 833 (the reverse side of the leaf filmed in Frame 834). Some of these sketches are discussed in Tucker, “Stravinsky and His Sketches,” 253–54.

“Caph,” and continuing with F#–C#–Ab–Eb in “Resh.”¹⁶ The transposition of “Caph” ensured that both Hebrew initials would articulate Eb at their endings, connecting in both cases to strong D#s (in mm. 112 and 120). Too, the choral tetrachord sung in “Resh” is enharmonically equivalent to the (0257) chord sustained at the end of “Beth” (m. 65, shown in Example 5). Here, it emerges from a four-part array of rows presented by the orchestra (P₃, R₀, I₃, and RI₆, all of which begin on F#); the notes F#, C#, G#, and D# do not occur as an ordered segment in any of these rows.

Sketches at the lower right in Example 1b illustrate another type of relationship between words and music, and indicate another way in which Eb was brought to prominence in the First Elegy. These sketches relate to an accompanimental line in the ritornello passage (first heard in mm. 42–48). On staff 12, Stravinsky wrote out RI₀ in a rhythmicized string, ending with reiterated Ebs. The beaming and brackets indicate experimental fittings of text syllables to groups of tones in the row. In the later sketch on staff 15, fifteen syllables are deployed over eighteen eighth-note values (including a rest and the repetition of the word “sedet”). In the score shown in Example 8, additional repetitions of words (with their attendant row segments) extend the setting to thirty-two eighth notes, and create an effect frequently encountered in Stravinsky’s serial music: a “doubling back” to repeat some portion(s) of a row before continuing.¹⁷ Stravinsky’s sketch on staff 12 already indicates the points at which the doublings back will occur: the note heads on C, D, and F are enlarged, and their order numbers (1, 4, and 8) are written beneath. These notes (and these alone) will ultimately appear as the string accompaniment in the ritornello (mm. 42–61); they correspond to the first

¹⁶Multiple sketches confirm that the choral bass note in m. 118 should read Ab as shown here, not Cb as in the published score.

¹⁷van den Toorn (*The Music of Igor Stravinsky*) and Tucker (“Stravinsky and His Sketches”) also note Stravinsky’s tendency to “double back” during presentations of serial units. The vocal line of “Surge, aquilo,” with its interpolated hexachords, provides an expansive example of the technique.

Example 7. *De Elegia Prima*: “Caph,” Diphona II, and “Resh” (mm. 108–122)

The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 58-60$. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) sing the word "CAPH" in a call-and-response pattern. The instrumental parts include Violins I & II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The section "Diphona II" begins at measure 112, marked *Mesto* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 46$. It features Tenore I and Tenore II with the lyrics: "Vi-de, Do-mi-ne, et con-si-de-ra, —" and "Vi-de, vi-de, Do-mi-ne, et con-si-de-ra,". The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (*mf*), articulation (*pizz.*, *arco*), and performance instructions.

Chord Progression:

- Measures 108-110: C — G — D
- Measures 110-111: C# — F# — B
- Measures 111-112: F — Bb — Eb

Section: Diphona II

Tenore I: Vi-de, Do-mi-ne, et con-si-de-ra, —

Tenore II: Vi-de, vi-de, Do-mi-ne, et con-si-de-ra,

Example 7 [continued]

Ten. I $\overset{(4)}{\curvearrowright}$ $\overset{(3)}{\curvearrowright}$ $\overset{(4)}{\curvearrowright}$
 quoni- am fac- ta sum, fac- ta sum vi- lis.
 Ten. II $\overset{(3)}{\curvearrowright}$ $\overset{(3)}{\curvearrowright}$ $\overset{(3)}{\curvearrowright}$
 quoni- am, quoni- am fac- ta sum vi- lis.

$\text{♩} = 58-60$ $\boxed{F\# \text{---} C\# \text{---} G\# \text{---} D\#}$ = (0257)

S. *poco sf* RES(H) *poco sf*
 A. RES(H)
 T. *poco sf* RES(H)
 B. *poco sf* RES(H)

VI. I 114 115 116 117 118 119
mf cant.
 VI. II
 Vle. *mf cant.*
 Vc. *arco*
 Cb.

Example 7 [continued]

CORO $\text{♩} = 60$
 Cl. I, II *a 2* *f* *marc.* *I°*
 Cl. basso *f* *molto sf p* *f*
 Bugle C-alto *sord.* *mf*
 Tuba *sord.* *sf p*
 VI. I, II 120 121 122 *pizz. sf* *pizz. sf*
 Vle. *pizz.* *f*
 Vc. *pizz.* *sf* *f*
 Cb. *pizz.* *sf* *f*

(and stressed) syllables of the words “Quomodo,” “sedet,” and “civitas,” and “plena,” and they reinforce the rhythmic and pitch groups indicated in Example 8. The final setting secures a repetition of the (0257) row segment D, G, E, A, which was already hinted at in the sketch on staff 15. Commentators have remarked on the odd nature of this diatonic accompaniment to the fully dodecahonic tenor and flugelhorn duet in this passage.¹⁸ The sketches reveal how these notes were extracted from a full series statement in the service of the rhythms and accentuation of the words. When the ritornello recurs with different texts (in mm. 88–107 and 142–185), terminal repetitions of E \flat (and, in the latter, its upper fifth B \flat) grow even more insistent, helping to cement the centric role of this pitch class in the First Elegy.

Thus far we have focused on sketches relating to the First Elegy. The remainder of this essay deals with revisions in Stravinsky’s settings of the Third and Fifth Elegies. A typescript of the verses he initially selected for inclusion in *Threni* is preserved in the Archive.¹⁹ This document, heavily annotated with handwritten English translations, musical sketches, and revisions of the text, records changes that profoundly affected the form of the latter portions of the finished work.

As several commentators have noted, *Threni* resembles *Canticum Sacrum* in that both may be viewed as roughly symmetrical five-part designs in which relatively brief outer movements frame a longer, triply subdivided central one. Eric Walter White

¹⁸See Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 499; van den Toorn cites this passage as an instance of octatonic writing (*The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, 46), although he does not analyze it in detail. Presumably, Collection II {C, D, D \sharp , F, F \sharp , G \sharp , A, B} is implied: the boundary dyads (F \sharp –F and G \sharp –D \sharp) of the untransposed Retrograde used repeatedly by the tenor and flugelhorn are especially prominent, and of course, the C, D, and F of the string accompaniment also belong to this collection.

¹⁹Microfilm 114, frames 770–775. Stravinsky’s note at the beginning reads: “Text of my *Threni* from the Vulgata with some deleted parts I didn’t use. This text must be printed with the English parallel to it on the fly leaves of both full and vocal scores. King James version is to be used. April 24, 1958.”

Example 8. *De Elegia Prima: Ritornello* (mm. 42–49)

(stesso ♪)

Bugle C-alto

Ten. I Solo

CORO Sopr. Altis

VI. I, II unis.

Vle.

Bugle C-alto

Ten. I Solo

CORO S. A.

VI. I, II unis.

Vle.

Quo- - mo- do se- - det

Quo- mo- do se- det, quo- mo- do se- det so- la, se- det so- la ci- vi- tas

ci- vi- - tas ple- na po- pu- lo! Fac-

ple- na, ple- na po- pu- lo! Fac- ta est qua- si vi- du- a do- mi- na gen- ti- um

Quo- mo- do se- det (5 syllables) quo- mo- do se- det so- la, (7 syllables) se- det so- la ci- vi- tas (7 syllables) ple- na, ple- na po- pu- lo (7 syllables)

suggests that the architecture of Saint Mark's cathedral in Venice may have prompted the formal layout of *Canticum Sacrum*.²⁰ Of course, bookend effects were always highly favored by Stravinsky: among other nearly contemporary works, one thinks of *Orpheus*, *Agon*, and *In Memoriam Dylan Thomas*, which all feature similar framing passages. *Threni*'s special relationship to *Canticum Sacrum* involves the tripartite subdivision of the central movement. Stravinsky's unorthodox ordering of the three virtues in *Canticum Sacrum* (not Faith, Hope, Charity but Charity, Hope, Faith) is reflected in *Threni*'s *Querimonia*, *Sensus Spei*, and *Solacium* (that is, Complaint, Perceiving Hope, and Compensation), in which Hope is again the centerpiece of a triptych with a reassuring ending. It is important to recognize that this subdivision was entirely the composer's invention, and has no counterpart in the biblical Lamentations.

Example 9 summarizes the process by which Stravinsky modified the formal plan for the Third Elegy. Originally, twenty-one verses were deployed in three groups; each group contained a threefold repetition of seven Hebrew letters and their associated verses. (Obviously, one letter of the Hebrew alphabet had to be omitted so that the total would be divisible by three.) Perhaps uncomfortably reminded of the "thrice seven" melodramas in Schoenberg's *Pierrot*, Stravinsky revised this plan. In the *Sensus Spei*, he decided to distribute a full statement of RI_3 over the twelve syllables of eight Hebrew letters: Heth, Teth, Lamed, Nun, Samech, Ain, Tsade, and Coph. The notes of this row are pencilled in beside the verses in the typescript on hand-drawn staves (and are shown in parentheses beside the verses in Example 9). This scheme necessitated deletion of three verses, and resulted in a relocation of the boundary between *Sensus Spei* and *Solacium*. The revised *Sensus Spei* contains eight verses, and Stravinsky articulated their midpoint by placing the dynamic climax of the entire work at the end of "Nun" (mm. 244–245). Presumably, this revision suggested a need to delete three verses from the *Querimonia*

Example 9. *De Elegia Tertia*: Revision of the text

Original Version	Final Version
<p><i>Querimonia</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> { <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Aleph</p> <p>Beth</p> <p>Ghimel</p> <p>Daleth</p> <p>He</p> <p>Vau</p> <p>Zain</p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px; font-size: 3em;">7</div>	<p><i>Querimonia</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> { <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Aleph</p> <p>Beth</p> <p>—</p> <p>—</p> <p>—</p> <p>Vau</p> <p>Zain</p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px; font-size: 3em;">4</div>
<p><i>Sensus Spei</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> { <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Heth</p> <p>Teth</p> <p>Iod</p> <p>Lamed</p> <p>Mem</p> <p>Nun</p> <p>Samech</p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px; font-size: 3em;">7</div>	<p><i>Sensus Spei</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> { <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Heth (D#)</p> <p>Teth (E)</p> <p>—</p> <p>Lamed (A–F)</p> <p>—</p> <p>Nun (Bb)</p> <p>Samech (G–C)</p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px; font-size: 3em;">4</div>
<p><i>Solacium</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> { <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Ain</p> <p>Phe</p> <p>Tsade</p> <p>Coph</p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px; font-size: 3em;">7</div>	<p><i>Solacium</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> { <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Ain (G#–B)</p> <p>—</p> <p>Tsade (D–C#)</p> <p>Coph (F#)</p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px; font-size: 3em;">4</div>
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">Resh</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Sin</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Thau</p>	<p><i>Solacium</i></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> { <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Resh</p> <p>Sin</p> <p>Thau</p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-left: 10px; font-size: 3em;">3</div>

so that it would more nearly balance the newly curtailed *Solacium*. At the very outset, Stravinsky's choice of text guided the creation of the row; here, the length of the row dictated revisions of the text which affected the formal design.

²⁰White, *Stravinsky*, 482–83.

The decision to distribute the notes of RI_3 over the entire *Sensus Spei* had important harmonic consequences as well, as illustrated in Example 10. By sustaining and repeating the pitch classes used in the Hebrew initials, Stravinsky created a clearly audible chromatic line that rises from the $D\sharp$ of “Heth,” through the E of “Teth,” to the F at the top of the “Lamed” sixth. Stravinsky continues this chromatic succession in the upper voice with the $G\flat$ of m. 231, over the $B\flat$ bass pedal of “Nun,” which continues the unfolding of the row. Walsh and other commentators have remarked on the local implication of $E\flat$ minor at this point.²¹ The deep reduction of the first half of the movement in Example 10 suggests that Stravinsky coordinated his serial materials so as to ensure a focal role for $E\flat$ over a considerably longer span leading to the dramatic “half cadence” at the dynamic climax of the entire work. Notably, the beginning of RI_3 appears just to the left of Stravinsky’s abbreviated row chart on the sketch leaf described above (Ex. 1b, staff 6, center).

Among the sketches for the later portions of *Threni*, there are a number of passages first sketched using the row forms from the tonic complex, but subsequently transposed—in every case by a whole tone or a semitone. The absence of cases involving transposition by minor third or tritone is highly suggestive: all of Stravinsky’s transpositions effected shifts from one family of row forms to another. In the *Querimonia*, for example, the canonic passages in mm. 182 and 184 were sketched a whole step lower than they appear in the score.²² The imitative passage in m. 191 was originally sketched a whole step higher.²³ In the setting of “Thau,” at the end of the Third Elegy, Stravinsky replaced a rather bland repetition of passages based entirely on rows from the tonic complex with a dramatic chromatic ascent. In the score, the leading voices of the canons enter on D (m. 360), $E\flat$ (m. 369), and finally E (m. 378). Thus Stravinsky completes a tour of rows from

Example 10. *De Elegia Tertia*: “Tonal” reading of *Sensus Spei* (mm. 194–245)

all three families before returning to rows of the tonic complex at the opening of the Fifth Elegy, which follows *attacca*. This transposition also secured $B\flat$ s as the final vocal pitches in four of the six voices at the end of the Solacium, providing strong “dominant” preparation for the $D\sharp$ s which open the final movement.²⁴

An early sketch for the beginning of the Fifth Elegy shows that here again, a member of the tonic complex (the untransposed Retrograde) once supplied the pitch material for the orchestral parts in mm. 385–387.²⁵ In the score, shown in Example 11, the passage lies a half step higher: note that R_1 (G, $F\sharp$, . . . A, E) shares boundary dyads with I_6 (A, E, . . . G, $F\sharp$), which immediately follows in the vocal solos (mm. 387–390). The transposition enabled Stravinsky to create a link like the ones he had used in the First Elegy. An audible succession of perfect fifths in mm. 385–387 ($F\sharp$ – $C\sharp$ in the piano and winds, C–G in the horns, $E\flat$ – $B\flat$ in the harp, alto clarinet, and flute, and A–E in the bass clarinet and alto solo) spells out a full octatonic collection, demonstrating

²¹Stephen Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky* (London: Routledge, 1988), 239.

²²These sketches appear on Microfilm 114, Frames 802 and 803.

²³Microfilm 114, Frame 794. The sketch is dated 24 December 1957.

²⁴The sketches for “Thau” on Microfilm 114, Frames 789 and 790 also show that Stravinsky omitted B (the eighth member of the untransposed Prime) in m. 361 of the soprano solo. The omission was not corrected when the passage was transposed down a half step; $A\sharp$ is missing in the score.

²⁵Microfilm 114, Frame 854.

Example 11. *De Elegia Quinta*: Opening measures (mm. 384–387)

[I₀] Basso I
 SOLI
 [P₀] Basso II
 profondo

f $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 50$
 O-ra-ti-o Je-re-mi-ae Pro-phe-tae.
 O-ra-ti-o Je-re-mi-ae Pro-phe-tae.

yet another way Stravinsky could tease out diatonic, octatonic, and dodecapronic elements in a single passage. The tenor soloists repeat the E_b – B_b fifth several times in mm. 388–389, once again confirming the centrality of E_b .²⁶

One of the most striking differences between the biblical Lamentations and Stravinsky's *Threni* is that of tone. The unrelieved anguish and relentless yearning of the biblical lamentations—which account for the word “jeremiad” in our language—are not precisely mirrored in Stravinsky's text or in the music he composed for it. By selectively omitting portions of the biblical text, Stravinsky fashioned a much more hopeful work, in which there is a considerable range of emotional contrast. The ending provides the clearest illustration, and demonstrates that the process of revising the text extended to the final stages of composing the piece. The final verses of the Lamentations read:

Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned;
 renew our days as of old.
 But thou hast utterly rejected us;
 Thou art very angry with us.

By omitting the last sentence, Stravinsky completely reverses the despairing tone, and simultaneously justifies a musical return (in an elaborate vocal palindrome, from the words “*Converte nos*” to

the end) to the row forms he used at the outset. The typescript from which Stravinsky worked reveals that the omission of the last sentence was in fact a revision: these lines are heavily deleted and a circled period is added after “renew our days as of old.”²⁷ Throughout *Threni*, text painting extends from the grandest scale to the smallest detail. At the end of the piece, excerpted in Example 12, a gradual thinning of the texture ultimately leaves only a single bass soloist sustaining his G_b —an individual voice, one man, as it was in the beginning (*sicut a principio*). At every step in the creation of the piece, Stravinsky coordinated revisions of text and music to ensure the coherence of both.

Stravinsky's sketches afford unique perspectives on his carefully guarded working methods, and can enormously enrich our appreciation for—and sharpen our analytical understanding of—*Threni* and other works of his last creative period. Appreciation of the intimate relationship between text and serial patterning in *Threni*, for example, may mitigate its oft-remarked austerity, and promote more effective reception. As we have seen, the sketches chronicle Stravinsky's invention of the row and his discovery of certain features and properties which dramatically influenced the shape the work was to take. From the outset, Stravinsky's preoccupation with particular pitches, intervals, and motives is

²⁶ E_b and B_b occupy order positions 6 and 7 in both R_1 and I_6 .

²⁷Microfilm 114, Frame 775.

Example 11 [continued]

Fl. I $\text{♩} = 50$

Ob. I *p ma marc.*

Cl. I. *p*

Cl. II *p*

Cl. alto *p*

Cl. basso *p*

Cor. I *sord. poco sf p sub.*

in Fa II *sord. poco sf p sub.*

Piano *poco sf p*

Arpa *mf*

Alto solo *parlando sotto voce* in- tu- e

CORO tutti

Re-cor- da- re, Do- mi- ne, quid ac- ci- de- rit no- bis;

$\begin{matrix} \boxed{C\#} \\ \boxed{F\#} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} \boxed{G} \\ \boxed{C} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} \boxed{B\flat} \\ \boxed{E\flat} \end{matrix}$

$\begin{matrix} \boxed{E} \\ \boxed{A} \end{matrix}$

(Alto solo = I_6)

= OCTATONIC COLLECTION III

Example 12. *De Elegia Quinta*: Final measures of vocal parts (mm. 415–417)

Sopr. si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

Alto si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

SOLI

Ten. I si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

Basso II — si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

S. si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

A. si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

CORO

T. si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

B. — si- cut a prin-ci- pi-o.

abundantly evident, and the sketches show how he personalized the “method of composing with twelve tones” in order to weave them into *Threni*’s serial fabric, creating effects analogous to the centricities and hierarchies of traditional tonality. Moreover, the sketches reveal how Stravinsky selected the precise note combinations he employed—not only the row forms and their transpositions, but also the selective doublings, registral placements, and harmonic projections of particular notes, intervals, and chords—always in service of the words, and often inspired by their syllabification, their rhythms, and their meanings. Stravinsky’s claim that “in *Threni* simple triadic references occur in every bar,”²⁸ is a provocative overstatement; his sketches can help us to gauge its usefulness. They undoubtedly have far more to tell us, both about *Threni* and about his remarkable development as a serial composer.²⁹

ABSTRACT

Close readings of selected sketches for Stravinsky’s first entirely dodeca- phonic composition provide new perspectives on the composer’s working methods. This essay focuses on sketches relating to the invention of the row upon which *Threni* is based, and upon Stravinsky’s discovery of particular features and properties of this row which guided his selection of the transformations and transpositions he ultimately employed. Reconstruction of the process by which Stravinsky arrived at the definitive Prime suggests reasons for the pivotal role played by the note Eb, and for the privileged status which accrues to members of the family of row forms beginning and/or ending with the notes Eb, Gb, A, and C. Sketch evidence and score analysis illustrate ways in which Stravinsky manipulated the “method of composing with twelve tones” to create effects analogous to traditional tonal centricities and hierarchies.

²⁸*Memories and Commentaries*, 107.

²⁹Joseph Straus is engaged in a monumental investigation of Stravinsky’s late music. Some results are reported in the *Music Theory Spectrum* article cited in note 13, above; others are forthcoming in *Journal of Musicology*, *Intégral*, and in a monograph on the subject. He has generously shared much of this work-in-progress with me.

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